

Holy Spirit in the New Testament

By H. A. (Buster) Dobbs

Vol. 107, No. 02

▪ I. Introduction

- A. The writers of the Old Testament looked for a time when the Holy Spirit would do a greater work than was done in their day.
- B. They stressed the importance of words that would be spoken and written because of the work of the Holy Spirit. Consider the importance of the words of revelation.
 - 1. "The Spirit of the Lord Jehovah is upon me; because Jehovah hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the year of Jehovah's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, that he may be glorified" (Isa. 61:1-3).
 - 2. The context of this passage shows these words were spoken to Judah before the Babylonian captivity and refer to the restoration and rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple but have a second and ultimate fulfillment in Jesus (See Luke 4:16-21). The

message was from "the Spirit of the Lord Jehovah."

- C. The power and importance of the revealed word is emphasized. The word heard, revealed, preached, believed and obeyed is dominant.
 - 1. Matthew 4:12-17 and Isaiah 9:1-2— Jesus began to preach.
 - 2. Matthew 11:2-6; Isaiah 35:5-10—gospel is preached.
 - 3. Matthew 12:15-21 and Isaiah 42:1-4—Jehovah's servant shall declare judgment.
 - 4. Matthew 13:14-17 and Isaiah 6:9-10— see, hear, believe.
 - 5. Matthew 13:35 and Psalms 78:1-3— teach and reveal.
 - 6. Luke 4:16-21 and Isaiah 61:1-3—preach good tidings.
 - 7. John 12:37-41 and Isaiah 53:1; Isaiah 6:9-10—a message is to be believed.
- D. The Bible deals with the message more than the messenger. The real messenger was the Holy Spirit, and, being God, he is deep, inscrutable, and incomprehensible, but we can grasp the words the Holy Spirit revealed.
- II. The Holy Spirit and the Word in the New Testament
 - A. John the Baptist was a forerunner.
 - 1. He was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth (Luke 1:15).
 - 2. He was to prepare the way for Messiah (Isaiah 40:3).
 - 3. He would turn the hearts of the people to God (Malachi 4:5-6).
 - 4. He did his work by exhortation and preaching (Luke 3:18)
 - B. The work of Jesus was planned by God.
 - 1. "He that hath received his witness hath set his seal to this, that God is true. For

he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for he giveth not the Spirit by measure. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:34-36).

- a) Note: Jesus is the one God sent. Jesus spoke the words of God: for (the reason is) he (God) giveth not the Spirit by measure. Obviously, the one who spoke the words of God, is the one who received the Spirit without measure—Jesus received the spirit without measure.
- b) Others must have received the Spirit by measure; otherwise it does not make sense to say Jesus had an immeasurable measure of the Spirit.
- 2. Emphasis was put on the teaching (the words) of Jesus: "Never man so spake" (John 7:46).
 - a) "The multitudes were astonished at his teaching" (Matt. 7:28).
 - b) "Hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5).
 - c) "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).
 - d) "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that y, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. Every one therefore that heareth these words of mine, and doeth them, shall be likened unto a wise man, who built his house upon the rock" (Matt. 7:21-24).

- e) "It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63).
- f) "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he that is from God, he hath seen the Father" (John 6:44-46).
- g) "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I came forth and am come from God; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. But because I say the truth, ye believe me

not. Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8:42-47)

- h) "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him. Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself: but the Father abiding in me doeth his works" (John 14:7-10; Amos 1:1). Daniel said, 'heard I the voice of his words" (Dan. 10:9). Balaam said, ' 'The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak" (Num. 22:38).

Comments on the Outline

God instructs the people of earth through the medium of words. The Holy Spirit used words in instructing chosen leaders who repeated the words to the public. The words would sometimes come to the receiver through the eye, at other times through the ear, and occasionally the words were put in the mouth, but the message always came in the signs and symbols of ideas and was communicated to the people in words.

"The words of Amos, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa, which

he saw concerning Israel...." (Amos 1:1). Daniel said, "heard I the voice of his words" (Dan.10:9). Balaam said, "The word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak" (Num. 22:38).

The Bible stresses the importance of inspired writings. The New Testament says the Holy Spirit influences human minds through a medium, except in some miracles—*miracles confined to the first century.*

God made the world by the creative power of his spoken word. God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters." God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together unto one place." God said, "Let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so." God spoke, and it was done. "By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God" (Heb. 11:3).

"... It is God, that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 4:6). Paul's argument is that the same God who called light out of darkness in the beginning, demonstrated how weighty and mighty his word is, by giving the revelation of his gospel of salvation. We dare not ignore nor belittle it.

The force of God's word is well documented in the Bible. The gospel is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16). Still, some misguided souls call it "the mere word" and "the dead letter." Those who faithfully follow the teaching of the Bible are called strict constructionists and legalists. These terms are used in derision and are not unlike the Jews' calling Jesus a Samaritan to disgrace him. Jesus set the proper response pattern for us when he discounted their slap by saying they dishonored him and pointed out that he was doing his Father's will, but they were not so disposed. The apostle argues we do

not handle the word of God deceitfully. ..The gods of this world blind the minds of the unbelieving to prevent them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ...We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power may be of God" (2 Cor. 4:1-7). He calls the scriptures "the word of God...the gospel of the glory of Christ...a treasure...an exceeding great power."

We do not war according to the flesh, but "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; and being in readiness to avenge all disobedience, when your obedience shall be made full" (2 Cor. 10:5-6).

Our obedience is to be full, complete, perfect. It is the Comforter—the Holy Spirit—who gives to us divine revelation. "Wherefore, even as the Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye shall hear his voice" (Heb. 3:7). "Brethren, it was needful that the scripture should be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spake before by the mouth of David concerning Judas" (Acts 1:16). "The Spirit of Jehovah spake by me, And his word was upon my tongue" (2 Sam. 23:2). "But the Spirit saith expressly, that in later times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1).

The word of truth revealed by the Holy Spirit is sufficient and adequate to make sinners acceptable to God. We are not to follow the ambiguous leadings of doubtful feelings but are to submit to the absolute standard of scripture inspired of God.

"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

"Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth" (Matt. 6:10).

"The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring the soul: The testimony of Jehovah is sure, making wise the simple" (Psalms

19:7).

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).

“And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work” (2 Tim. 3:15-17)

“It is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, are life” (John 6:63).

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death” (Rom. 8:2).

“But he that looketh into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and so continueth, being not a hearer that forgetteth but a doer that worketh, this man shall be blessed in his doing” (James 1:25).

“For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deluding your own selves” (James 1:22).

“Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (James 1:18).

“Seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren, love one another

from the heart fervently: having been begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever, For, all flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: But the word of the Lord abideth for ever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:22-25).

"For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).

"Wherefore putting away all filthiness and overflowing of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21).

John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth finished their God-given assignments through the power of words. The overriding importance of the message is prominent in the God-given scriptures (writings). As we look at the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the apostles of Jesus, certain disciples in the first century, and all the saved, we will understand more fully the Spirit's work of revealing, confirming, and protecting the plan of salvation as given in the new covenant.

"Now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give {you} the inheritance among all them that are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

Holy Spirit

By Frazier Conley

Vol. 122, No. 4

*...we did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given
(Acts 19:2 ASV)*

What is the object or goal of the following discussion, what is the subject? The subject is, "Holy Spirit baptism." Why does it come up for discussion? It is a New Testament phrase about which conflicting ideas are expressed – and because it is a good starting point for understanding the whole doctrine of the Spirit.

The following is a complete list of the passages where the phrase is used:

- Matthew 3:11: "I indeed 'baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire:"
- Mark 1:8: "I baptized you in water; but he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit."
- Luke 3:16: "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water, but there cometh he that is mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and (in) fire."
- John 1:33: "And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize in water, he said unto me. Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit."
- Acts 1:5: "For John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence."
- Acts 11:16: "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water: but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit."

Some would add 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free; and were all made to drink of one Spirit." Later, however, I will show that this passage does not belong in the list, at least not as it is usually interpreted.

What are some of the diverse ideas Bible students have when they speak of being "baptized in the Holy Spirit?" The following list summarizes several of these:

- Some will say that it is the Holy Spirit entering into a person and bringing him "regeneration." It is salvation, as they suppose, that is accomplished.
- Similarly, others hold it is the saving presence or action of the Holy Spirit at baptism – water being the external part of the baptism and the Spirit the internal part. Some of these will teach that the Holy Spirit in baptism is "non-miraculous." Others will say that it sometimes, or always, involves miracle power.
- People who hold the "Pentecostal" viewpoint will affirm that at conversion one receives an indwelling of the Spirit. Then, subsequent to conversion, Christians should seek to receive power from the Holy Spirit. The empowerment must involve speaking in "unknown tongues." This, they say, is Holy Spirit baptism.
- Still others explain that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a special measure of power (the "baptismal" measure), bestowed exclusively on the apostles and the house of Cornelius.

Are any of these correct? The thesis here is that none of them is exactly right. The following statement is Holy Spirit baptism in a nutshell. The remainder of the discussion in this book will set forth a defense of the following definition in the context of the larger New Testament theology of the Spirit:

Holy Spirit baptism is that event of the first century in which God gave divine notice to the world of the commencement

of the age of salvation in Christ. He did so by imparting to a large number of people a variety of extraordinary Holy Spirit empowerments, including especially prophetic proclamation. This event was initiated on the day of Pentecost, as depicted in Acts 2. It ceased with the fading of the apostolic period. The manifestations were not only attention getting, but also served to advance and confirm the gospel. Receiving the Holy Spirit in this office though associated with an attitude receptive to the gospel was not the means or the instrument of one's personal salvation; nor was it the Pauline doctrine of the indwelling Spirit; rather, it was simple empowerment.

Here it is suggested that one should not say, "Holy Spirit baptism" but, *the* Holy Spirit baptism." It was a specific event, which had a beginning and an ending.

The Spirit received for empowering proclamation

To confirm the distinction made in Acts between reception of the Holy Spirit and salvation itself, one first needs to look carefully at Luke 4:18-19. There Jesus quotes Isaiah 61:1-2:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor: He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, And recovering of sight to the blind. To set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

The Messiah receives the Spirit in order to preach or proclaim the good news of salvation, the arrival of the acceptable year of the Lord. He did not receive the Spirit for his own personal sanctification or for imparting the Spirit to others for indwelling sanctification. Throughout the gospel of Luke and the book of Acts the Spirit was received by persons, and then it is specified that the recipients as a result

proclaimed and preached the gospel.’ The gospel of salvation is *proclaimed* through the empowerment of the Spirit. *Salvation* comes when the hearer of the proclamation responds obediently to what is proclaimed.

In this connection one should especially note Luke 24:46-49; Acts 2:38-39; and 5:31-32. In Luke 24 forgiveness of sins upon repentance is first mentioned (Luke 24:46-47). Then separately the conferral upon the apostles empowering them for preaching is noted (Luke 24:48-49). The preaching of salvation by the Spirit is not the salvation. The same order and distinction is in Acts 2:38-39. Peter first proclaims repentance and baptism in the name of Jesus Christ for remission of sins. Then he mentions the reception of the Spirit – a reception that in Luke’s gospel and the book of Acts, time and again, is an empowerment for proclamation. In Acts 5:30-32 first there is the proclamation of the gospel, the promise of repentance, and the forgiveness based thereon. Second, there is the mention of the Spirit who empowers testimony. The role of the Spirit is to empower the proclamation, not to indwell directly and sanctify by his presence, as described in Paul’s letters. The forgiveness or salvation comes when the gospel is preached and the correct response follows – repentance and baptism. In summary, one (a) learns about the salvation from preaching inspired by the Spirit: (b) and one responds to the preaching and obtains forgiveness by a penitent baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. The two matters are not identical.

As noted, among the powers bestowed during the period of the Holy Spirit baptism was the gift of inspiration, prophetic utterance. Inspiration was a special empowerment, although *it* was not technically “miraculous.” Nevertheless miracles, manifestations, predictions, and tongues usually accompanied inspiration, which authenticated the inspiration.

How conferred?

If the baptism in the Holy Spirit consisted of a widespread bestowal of special Holy Spirit powers conferred upon the inaugural generation of the church, how was the power imparted? Certain principles, set forth especially in Acts, arise from the New Testament description.

It will be shown that:

(1) the extraordinary empowerment was conferred *directly* (without apostolic hands) only upon the twelve at Pentecost, and the house of Cornelius;

(2) through apostolic hands alone was such power conferred to others (Cornelius received the “same” gift as the apostles so far as the manner of reception – direct from heaven – but not the measure of power given to the apostolic office, which included the ability to confer gifts of the Holy Spirit to others by laying on of hands);

(3) the power necessarily ceased with the apostolic age; and (very important);

(4) the reception of such power was only indirectly related to individual personal salvation.

Basic facts.

Here are some basic facts about Holy Spirit baptism. As noted, the expression “baptize in the Holy Spirit” or its verbal equivalent occurs only six times in scripture (Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5; 11:16). Acts has the most to say about it – the expression itself however occurs in Acts only in quotations from Jesus. The author of Acts, in his own usage, wanted to reserve the word *baptize* for (water) immersion. Instead, Luke speaks of the Holy Spirit baptism typically by such phrases as “filled with the Spirit.”

The first reference in Acts states:

...he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which said he, ye heard from me: For John in. deed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence... you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:4-5, 8).

Note the following facts from these verses:

- (1)The baptism in the Holy Spirit was “the promise of the Father.”
- (2) It would occur, for the apostles, within a few days.
- (3)This event would bring to its recipients an empowerment for witness.

The preamble to Acts 1 is Luke 24:36-53, “And behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city until ye be clothed with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). Note again that “the promise of the Father” (the Holy Spirit baptism) would include “power from on high.”

With reference to the apostles (others would receive empowerment in due time), the “promise of the Father” was plainly kept on the day of Pentecost, when they were filled with the Holy Spirit from heaven (Acts 2:1-13). They were empowered to speak in tongues. The whole event was accompanied by a sound from heaven like wind (which filled the entire chamber); and flames in appearance like fire, resting on each of them. Peter explains in Acts 2:33 that the Father had imparted the promised Holy Spirit to Jesus, and that Jesus then “poured out” upon the apostles that which had been seen and heard. This was the event which empowered the apostolic witness (see Acts 1:8).

When Peter began his sermon in Acts 2, he said:

... but this is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel: And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth of my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: yea and on my servants and on my handmaidens in those days will I pour forth of my spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord comes, that great and notable day. And it shall be, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:16-21).

There is no ambiguity in Peter's introduction: "This is that." The event which had just been witnessed: the sound, the fire-like phenomenon, and the languages were the fulfillment (or the inauguration of the fulfillment) of the prophecy found in Joel.

We pointed out that the prophecy of Joel is the "promise of God" – the promised "pouring out" of his Spirit. Therefore, when John the baptist spoke of the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and when Jesus is quoted in Acts 1:5; 11:16. The reference is to the prophecy of Joel in chapter 2:28-32. Clearly, if anyone is to understand the baptism in the Holy Spirit, he must understand Joel's prophecy.

Summary

In Acts the following are related or correlated: (1) the baptism in the Holy Spirit. (2) the promise of the Father, (3) the coming of the Holy Spirit, (4) the reception of power from on high, and (5) the events of Acts 2:1-4. This included (6) being filled with the Spirit, (7) the sound that filled the

house. (8) the fire- like flames. (9) the empowerment to speak in tongues, (10) the fulfillment of Joel 2:28-32, and thus, (11) the pouring out of God's Spirit.

John the baptist declared that he baptized with water, but the Lord would baptize with the Holy Spirit. Did John affirm that water baptism replaces Spirit baptism? Many Bible students take it this way. However, it is quite indisputable that Jesus ordained water baptism for his church (Acts 8:36-39; 10:47-48; 22:16; Eph. 5:26; et al.).

Please note carefully (it is frequently overlooked) that the word *baptizo*, when used literally and without any specification of a medium, has inherent in it the element of water (Oepke, *TDNT* 1:539; and see most Greek lexicons). *Baptizo* should therefore, in many passages, be rendered "immerse in water" and resurrected to a new life. By definition in such passages it cannot be understood to refer to a baptism "in Spirit." It is clear that John was not teaching that Jesus was going replace water baptism with Spirit baptism.

Since the elements of the two baptisms are not the point of contrast, what is? The comparison is rather John's ministry, his preparation for the kingdom, versus its later inauguration with the coming of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. John's ministry could not claim the fulfillment of Joel 2. His ministry was a baptism of water only, looking forward to the coming of Christ. Christ, in the new age, not only authorizes a water baptism, but at the inaugural he confers an overwhelming of the Holy Spirit on the infant church.

John's ministry (thus his baptism) was preparatory; Jesus' ministry (including the baptizing in the Holy Spirit), in contrast, was the consummation. From another perspective (looking toward the future), Jesus' ministry, with its culmination on the day of Pentecost, was initiatory.

¹One should notice John the Baptist (Luke 1:14-17); Elizabeth (Luke 1:41-45); Zechariah (Luke 1:67-79); Simeon (Luke 2:25-35); Jesus (Luke 4:14-15, cf. 16-21; 10:21-22); disciples (Luke 12:12); the Twelve (Acts 1:8; 24ff, cf 2:17ff: 4:8ff, 31: 10:19ff, 34ff; 11:12, 14); Stephen (Acts 6:5, 8-10ff; 7:1ff, cf. 7:51); Philip (8:29ff; Paul (Acts 9:17, 20); the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:44-46); Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2, 4ff); and the Ephesian 12 (Acts 19:6). Other Luke-Acts material could be cited which suggest something similar.